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[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/71/484/Add.3)*]

71/203. Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

The General Assembly,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1] and relevant international human rights treaties, including the International Covenants on Human Rights,[2]

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and to the principles of the Charter,

Recalling its resolutions 66/176 of 19 December 2011, 66/253 A of 16 February 2012, 66/253 B of 3 August 2012, 67/183 of 20 December 2012, 67/262 of 15 May 2013, 68/182 of 18 December 2013, 69/189 of 18 December 2014 and 70/234 of 23 December 2015, Human Rights Council resolutions S-16/1 of 29 April 2011,[3] S-17/1 of 23 August 2011,[3] S-18/1 of 2 December 2011,[4] 19/1 of 1 March 2012,[5] 19/22 of 23 March 2012,[5] S-19/1 of 1 June 2012,[6] 20/22 of 6 July 2012,[7] 21/26 of 28 September 2012,[8] 22/24 of 22 March 2013,[9] 23/1 of 29 May 2013,[10] 23/26 of 14 June 2013,[10] 24/22 of 27 September 2013,[11] 25/23 of 28 March 2014,[12] 26/23 of 27 June 2014,[13] 27/16 of 25 September 2014,[14] 28/20 of 27 March 2015,[15] 29/16 of

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[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

[2] Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[3] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/66/53), chap. I.

[4] Ibid., *Supplement No. 53B* and corrigendum (A/66/53/Add.2 and Corr.1), chap. II.

[5] Ibid., *Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 53* and corrigendum (A/67/53 and Corr.1), chap. III, sect. A.

[6] Ibid., chap. V.

[7] Ibid., chap. IV, sect. A.

[8] Ibid., *Supplement No. 53A* (A/67/53/Add.1), chap. III.

[9] Ibid., *Sixty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/68/53), chap. IV, sect. A.

[10] Ibid., chap. V, sect. A.

[11] Ibid., *Supplement No. 53A* (A/68/53/Add.1), chap. III.

[12] Ibid., *Sixty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/69/53), chap. IV, sect. A.

[13] Ibid., chap. V, sect. A.

[14] Ibid., *Supplement No. 53A* and corrigenda (A/69/53/Add.1 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. IV, sect. A.

[15] Ibid., *Seventieth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/70/53), chap. II.

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2 July 2015,[16] 30/10 of 1 October 2015,[17] 31/17 of 23 March 2016,[18] 32/25 of 1 July 2016,[19] 33/23 of 30 September 2016[20] and S-25/1 of 21 October 2016[21] and Security Council resolutions 2042 (2012) of 14 April 2012, 2043 (2012) of 21 April 2012, 2118 (2013) of 27 September 2013, 2139 (2014) of 22 February 2014, 2165 (2014) of 14 July 2014, 2170 (2014) of 15 August 2014, 2178 (2014) of 24 September 2014, 2191 (2014) of 17 December 2014, 2209 (2015) of 6 March 2015, 2235 (2015) of 7 August 2015, 2258 (2015) of 22 December 2015, 2268 (2016) of 26 February 2016 and 2286 (2016) of 3 May 2016, and the statements by the President of the Council of 3 August 2011,[22] 2 October 2013[23] and 17 August 2015,[24]

Condemning the grave deterioration of the human rights situation and the indiscriminate killing and deliberate targeting of civilians as such, in violation of international humanitarian law, and acts of violence that foment sectarian tensions,

Noting with deep concern the culture of impunity for serious violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights law committed during the present conflict, which has provided a fertile ground for further violations and abuses,

Recalling that, amid expressions of popular discontent over restrictions on the enjoyment of civil, political, economic and social rights, civilian protests erupted in Dar'a in March 2011, and noting that the excessive and violent oppression of civilian protests by the Syrian authorities, which later escalated to the direct shelling of civilians, fuelled the escalation of armed violence and extremist groups, including so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL-Da'esh),

Expressing outrage at the continuing escalation of violence in the Syrian Arab Republic, which has caused more than 400,000 fatalities, including the killing of many more than 15,000 children, and in particular at the continued widespread and systematic gross violations, as well as abuses, of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including those involving the continued indiscriminate use of heavy weapons and aerial bombardments, such as the indiscriminate use of ballistic missiles, bunker-busting bombs, cluster munitions and barrel and vacuum bombs, and by the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and the use of chlorine gas, which are prohibited under international humanitarian law, by the Syrian authorities against the Syrian population,

Expressing outrage and grave concern at the escalation of violence in eastern Aleppo as a result of the recent offensive by the Syrian authorities and their allies, which has caused hundreds of civilian casualties, including rescue workers, first responders, women and more than 100 children, and nearly 2,000 injured and has included repeated attacks against medical facilities, medical personnel and patients and on critical civilian infrastructure,

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[16] Ibid., chap. V, sect. A.

[17] Ibid., *Supplement No. 53A* (A/70/53/Add.1), chap. II.

[18] Ibid., *Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/71/53), chap. II.

[19] Ibid., chap. IV, sect. A.

[20] Ibid., *Supplement No. 53A* and corrigendum (A/71/53/Add.1 and Corr.1), chap. II.

[21] Ibid., *Supplement No. 53B* and corrigendum (A/71/53/Add.2 and Corr.1), chap. II.

[22] S/PRST/2011/16; see *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council, 1 August 2011–31 July 2012* (S/INF/67).

[23] S/PRST/2013/15; see *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council, 1 August 2013–31 July 2014* (S/INF/69).

[24] S/PRST/2015/15.

Recalling the specific obligations under international humanitarian law to respect and protect, in situations of armed conflict, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, and hospitals and other medical facilities, and to ensure that the wounded and sick receive, to the fullest extent practicable and with the least possible delay, the medical care and attention required, and recalling also that, under international law, attacks intentionally directed against hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided that they are not military objectives, as well as attacks intentionally directed against buildings, material, medical units and transport and personnel using the distinctive emblems of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949[25] in conformity with international law are war crimes,

Expressing grave concern at the disproportionate use of force by the Syrian authorities against civilians, which has caused immense human suffering and fomented the spread of extremism and extremist groups and which demonstrates the failure of the Syrian authorities to protect its population and to implement the relevant resolutions and decisions of United Nations bodies,

Expressing grave concern also at the spread of extremism and extremist groups, terrorism and terrorist groups, and strongly condemning all violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic by any party to the conflict, in particular so-called ISIL-Da'esh, Al-Nusrah Front and militias fighting on behalf of the regime, Al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist groups and other extremist groups,

Expressing its deepest concern about the findings of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces were responsible for the use of chemical weapons in at least three attacks and so-called ISIL-Da'esh was responsible for one attack, reaffirming the principles of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction,[26] and the determination of the States parties to the Convention "for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons, through the implementation of the provisions of this Convention", and noting that the Convention entered into force in the Syrian Arab Republic on 14 October 2013,

Expressing support for the work carried out by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, and strongly condemning the lack of cooperation by the Syrian authorities with the Commission of Inquiry,

Noting with serious concern the observation of the Commission of Inquiry that, since March 2011, the Syrian authorities have conducted widespread attacks against the civilian population as a matter of policy,

Strongly condemning the widespread practice of enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and the use of sexual and gender-based violence and torture in detention centres referred to in the reports of the Commission of Inquiry, including, but not limited to, Branch 215, Branch 227, Branch 235, Branch 251, Air Force Intelligence Investigation Branch at Mezzeh military airport, and Sednaya prison, as well as military hospitals, including Tishreen and Harasta hospitals,

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[25] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970–973.

[26] Ibid., vol. 1974, No. 33757.

Recalling the statements made by the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council that crimes against humanity and war crimes are likely to have been committed in the Syrian Arab Republic, noting the repeated encouragement by the High Commissioner for the Security Council to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court, and regretting that a draft resolution[27] was not adopted notwithstanding broad support from Member States,

Expressing its deepest concern about the findings of the Commission of Inquiry and also the allegations contained in the evidence presented by "Caesar" in January 2014 regarding the torture and execution of persons incarcerated by the Syrian authorities, and underscoring the need for those allegations and similar evidence to be collected, examined and made available for future accountability efforts,

Expressing concern that the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2254 (2015) of 18 December 2015, 2258 (2015), 2268 (2016) and 2286 (2016) remains largely unfulfilled, and noting the urgent need to strengthen efforts to address the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, including through protection of civilians and rapid, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access,

Recalling its commitment to Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), and 2253 (2015) of 17 December 2015,

Alarmed that more than 4.8 million refugees, including more than 3.6 million women and children, have been forced to flee the Syrian Arab Republic and that 13.5 million people in the Syrian Arab Republic, of whom 6.1 million are internally displaced, require urgent humanitarian assistance, which has resulted in an influx of Syrian refugees into neighbouring countries, other countries in the region and beyond, and alarmed at the risk the situation presents to regional and international stability,

Expressing its profound indignation at the death of many more than 15,000 children and the many more injured since the beginning of the peaceful protests in March 2011, and at all grave violations and abuses committed against children in contravention of applicable international law, such as their recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape, kidnapping and abductions and attacks on schools and hospitals, as well as their arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, ill-treatment and their use as human shields,

Expressing its deep appreciation for the significant efforts that have been made by neighbouring countries and other countries in the region to accommodate Syrians, while acknowledging the increasing financial, socioeconomic and political impact of the presence of large-scale refugee and displaced populations in those countries, notably in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt and Libya,

Welcoming the hosting by the Government of Kuwait of the First, Second and Third International Humanitarian Pledging Conferences for Syria, held on 30 January 2013, 15 January 2014 and 31 March 2015, and expressing its deep appreciation for the significant pledges of humanitarian assistance that have been made, welcoming also the initiative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Germany, Norway, Kuwait and the United Nations, which

[27] S/2014/348.

co-hosted the London conference on supporting the Syrian Arab Republic and the region on 4 February 2016, and renewing its call upon all members of the international community to respond expeditiously to the Syrian humanitarian appeals and to disburse all previous pledges,

Welcoming also the efforts of the United Nations and the League of Arab States and all diplomatic efforts to achieve a political solution to the Syrian crisis based on the final communiqué of the Action Group for Syria of 30 June 2012,[28] and consistent with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015),

Expressing full support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, with a view to the protection of the civilian population and the full implementation of the Syrian political process that establishes credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance, in accordance with the final communiqué and consistent with Security Council resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2258 (2015), urging the Special Envoy to pave the way for the negotiation of a genuine political transition, demanding a restoration of the cessation of hostilities and that all parties to the cessation of hostilities in the Syrian Arab Republic respect their commitments, and urging all Member States, especially the members of the International Syria Support Group, to use their influence to ensure respect for those commitments and the full implementation of those resolutions, to support efforts to create conditions for a durable and lasting ceasefire, which is essential to achieving a political solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, and to bring to an end the systematic, widespread and gross violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law,

1. *Strongly condemns* the recent escalation of attacks directed against civilians in Aleppo and other besieged and hard-to-reach areas, and demands that the humanitarian provisions of Security Council resolutions 2254 (2015), 2258 (2015) and 2286 (2016) be immediately implemented and that humanitarian aid be safely delivered to all people in need;

2. *Also strongly condemns* all violations and abuses of international human rights law and all violations of international humanitarian law committed, in particular all indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, including the use of barrel bombs in civilian areas and against civilian infrastructure, and demands that all parties immediately demilitarize medical facilities and schools and comply with their obligations under international law;

3. *Deplores and condemns in the strongest terms* the continued armed violence by the Syrian authorities against its own people since the beginning of the peaceful protests in 2011, and demands that the Syrian authorities immediately put an end to all indiscriminate attacks, including those involving the use of terror tactics, air strikes, barrel and vacuum bombs, incendiary weapons, chemical weapons and heavy artillery;

4. *Strongly condemns* any use of any toxic chemicals, such as chlorine, by any party as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic;

5. *Recalls* the decision of the Security Council that the Syrian Arab Republic shall not use, develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons, or transfer, directly or indirectly, chemical weapons to other States or non-State actors, and, in keeping with the decision of the Council, expresses its strong conviction that those individuals responsible for the use of

[28] Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), annex II.

chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic should be held accountable, and calls for a significant enhancement of the verification measures of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons;

6. *Welcomes* the reports of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism of 24 August 2016[29] and 21 October 2016,[30] and notes with deep concern its findings that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces were responsible for the use of chemical weapons in at least three attacks in the Syrian Arab Republic (Talmenes in 2014, Sarmin in 2015 and Qmenas in 2015) and that so-called ISIL-Da'esh was responsible for one mustard gas attack in the Syrian Arab Republic (Marea in 2015);

7. *Demands* that the Syrian regime and so-called ISIL-Da'esh immediately cease the use of chemical weapons, and also demands that the Syrian regime adhere fully to its international obligations, including the requirement that it declare in full its chemical weapons programme, with special emphasis on the need for the Syrian Arab Republic to urgently resolve the verified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies pertaining to its declaration in respect of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction[26] and to eliminate its chemical weapons programme in its entirety as referred to in the report of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons dated 22 February 2016[31] indicating that the Technical Secretariat is at present unable to verify fully that the declaration and related submissions of the Syrian Arab Republic are accurate and complete, as required by the Convention and decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons;[32]

8. *Requests* additional procedures for stringent verification pursuant to article IV, paragraph 8, and article V, paragraph 10, of the Convention, in order to ensure the complete destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and prevent any further use of chemical weapons;

9. *Deplores and condemns in the strongest terms* the continued widespread and systematic gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and all violations of international humanitarian law by the Syrian authorities, the Government-affiliated *shabbiha* militias and those who fight on their behalf, including those deliberately targeting civilians or civilian objects, including attacks on schools, hospitals and places of worship, with heavy weapons, aerial bombardments, cluster munitions, ballistic missiles, barrel bombs, chemical or other weapons and other force against civilians, as well as the starvation of the civilian population as a method of warfare, attacks on schools, hospitals and places of worship, massacres, arbitrary executions, extrajudicial killings, the killing and persecution of peaceful protestors, human rights defenders and journalists, individuals and members of communities on the basis of their religion or belief, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, violations of women's and children's rights, forced displacement of members of minority groups, unlawful interference with access to medical treatment, failure to respect and protect medical personnel, torture, systematic sexual and gender-based violence, including rape in detention, and ill-treatment;

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[29] S/2016/738/Rev.1.

[30] S/2016/888.

[31] EC-81/HP/DG.1.

[32] Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), annex I.

10. *Calls for* a restoration of the cessation of hostilities in the Syrian Arab Republic, demands that all the parties, most notably the Syrian regime, stop their attacks against civilians, including in populated areas, and that all parties to the cessation of hostilities in the Syrian Arab Republic redouble their efforts to fulfil their commitments, consistent with Security Council resolution 2268 (2016), and urges all Member States, especially the members of the International Syria Support Group, to use their influence with the parties to the cessation of hostilities to ensure immediate implementation of a monitored and enforceable cessation of hostilities, to support efforts to create conditions for a durable and lasting ceasefire, which is essential to achieving a political solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, and to bring to an end the systematic, widespread and gross violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law;

11. *Strongly condemns* all human rights abuses or violations of international humanitarian law, including the killing and persecution of individuals and members of communities on the basis of their religion or belief, by armed extremists, as well as any human rights abuses or violations of international humanitarian law by armed anti-Government groups;

12. *Deplores and strongly condemns* the terrorist acts and violence committed against civilians by so-called ISIL-Da'esh and Al-Nusrah Front and their continued gross, systematic and widespread abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, and reaffirms that terrorism, including the actions of so-called ISIL-Da'esh, cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or civilization;

13. *Condemns in the strongest terms* the gross and systematic abuse of women's and children's rights by so-called ISIL-Da'esh, in particular the enslavement and sexual abuse of women and girls and the forced recruitment, use and abduction of children;

14. *Condemns* the reported forced displacements of the population in the Syrian Arab Republic and the alarming impact thereof on the demography of the country, and calls upon all parties concerned to cease immediately all activities related to these actions, including any activities that may amount to crimes against humanity;

15. *Reminds* the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic of its obligations under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,[33] including to take effective measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction, and calls upon all States parties to the Convention to comply with any relevant obligations under the Convention, including with respect to the extradite or prosecute principle contained in article 7 of the Convention;

16. *Strongly condemns* the reported persistent and widespread use of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation, including in government detention centres, including those run by the intelligence agencies, and notes that such acts may constitute violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law, and in this regard expresses deep concern at the prevailing climate of impunity for sexual violence crimes;

[33] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1465, No. 24841.

17. *Also strongly condemns* all violations and abuses committed against children in contravention of applicable international law, such as their recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and all other forms of sexual violence, abductions, denial of humanitarian access for children, and attacks on civilian objects, including schools and hospitals, as well as their arbitrary arrest, unlawful detention, torture and ill-treatment and their use as human shields;

18. *Recalls* the statement made by the Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic on 21 September 2015 that the Syrian authorities remain responsible for the majority of the civilian casualties, killing and maiming scores of civilians daily, reiterates its decision to transmit the reports of the Commission of Inquiry to the Security Council, expresses its appreciation to the Commission of Inquiry for its briefings to members of the Security Council, and requests that the Commission of Inquiry continue to brief the General Assembly and members of the Security Council;

19. *Reaffirms* the Syrian authorities' responsibility for enforced disappearances, takes note of the assessment of the Commission of Inquiry that the Syrian authorities' use of enforced disappearances amounts to a crime against humanity, and condemns the targeted disappearances of young men, following Government-brokered ceasefires;

20. *Expresses its profound concern* about the findings contained in the report of the Commission of Inquiry regarding the tragic and relentless level of indiscriminate attacks on civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic, targeted attacks on protected persons and objects, including medical facilities, personnel and transport and blocked humanitarian convoys, as well as enforced disappearances, summary executions and other violations and abuses;

21. *Deplores* the horrific attack on 19 September 2016 on a United Nations-Syrian Arab Red Crescent aid convoy in rural Aleppo, which was in clear violation of international humanitarian law, welcomes the decision of the United Nations to investigate this attack, calls for the perpetrators to be held accountable, and in this regard welcomes the establishment of an internal and independent United Nations Headquarters Board of Inquiry into the incident, and reaffirms that humanitarian workers and their means of transport, equipment and facilities must be protected in accordance with international humanitarian law;

22. *Demands* that the Syrian authorities cooperate fully with the Commission of Inquiry, including by granting it immediate, full and unfettered access throughout the Syrian Arab Republic;

23. *Also demands* that the Syrian authorities meet their responsibilities to protect the Syrian population;

24. *Strongly condemns* the intervention in the Syrian Arab Republic of all foreign terrorist fighters and those foreign organizations and foreign forces fighting on behalf of the Syrian regime, particularly the Al-Quds Brigades, the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and militia groups such as Hizbullah, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq and Liwa' Abu al-Fadl al-Abbas, and expresses deep concern that their involvement further exacerbates the deteriorating situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, including the human rights and humanitarian situation, which has a serious negative impact on the region;

25. *Also strongly condemns* all attacks against the Syrian moderate opposition, and calls for their immediate cessation, given that such attacks benefit so-called ISIL-Da'esh and other terrorist groups, such as Al-Nusrah Front, and contribute to a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation;

26. *Demands* that all foreign terrorist fighters, including those who are fighting in support of the Syrian authorities, immediately withdraw from the Syrian Arab Republic;

27. *Also demands* that all parties immediately put an end to all violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law, recalls, in particular, the obligation under international humanitarian law to distinguish between civilians and combatants and the prohibition against indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks and all attacks against civilians and civilian objects, further demands that all parties to the conflict take all appropriate steps to protect civilians, in compliance with international law, including by desisting from attacks directed against civilian objects, such as medical centres, schools and water stations, immediately demilitarize such facilities, seek to avoid establishing military positions in densely populated areas and enable the evacuation of the wounded and all civilians who wish to leave besieged areas, and recalls in this regard that the Syrian authorities bear primary responsibility for protecting its population;

28. *Condemns in the strongest terms* the increasing number of massacres and other mass casualty incidents, including those which may constitute a war crime, taking place in the Syrian Arab Republic, and requests the Commission of Inquiry to continue to investigate all such acts;

29. *Recalls* the statements made by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, indicating that the overwhelming majority of the civilian casualties in the Syrian Arab Republic have been caused by the indiscriminate use of aerial bombardments, demands in this regard that the Syrian authorities immediately cease any attacks on civilians, any disproportionate attacks and any indiscriminate use of weapons in populated areas, including any indiscriminate use of weapons involving shelling and aerial bombardment, in particular the use of barrel bombs and methods of warfare which are of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering, and recalls in this regard the obligation to respect international humanitarian law in all circumstances;

30. *Emphasizes* the need for accountability for crimes involving breaches of international law, in particular of international humanitarian law and human rights law, some of which may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity, committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, through fair and independent investigations and prosecutions at the domestic or international level;

31. *Welcomes* the efforts by States to investigate conduct in the Syrian Arab Republic and to prosecute crimes within their jurisdiction committed in the Syrian Arab Republic, and encourages them to continue doing so and to share relevant information between States in accordance with their national legislation and international law, and encourages other States to consider doing the same;

32. *Deplores* the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, and urges the international community to assume its responsibility for providing urgent financial support to enable the host countries and communities to respond to the growing humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees, while emphasizing the principle of burden-sharing;

33. *Calls upon* all members of the international community, including all donors, to fulfil their previous pledges and continue to provide much-needed support to the United Nations, its specialized agencies and other humanitarian actors to provide humanitarian assistance to the millions of Syrians displaced both internally and in host countries and communities;

34. *Strongly condemns* the intentional denial of humanitarian assistance to civilians, from whatever quarter, and in particular the denial of medical assistance and the withdrawal of water and sanitation services to civilian areas, which has recently worsened, stressing that the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited under international law, noting especially the primary responsibility of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in this regard, and deplores the deteriorating humanitarian situation;

35. *Demands* that the Syrian authorities and all other parties to the conflict not hinder the full, immediate, unimpeded and sustained access of the United Nations and humanitarian actors, including to besieged and hard-to-reach areas, consistent with Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2254 (2015) and 2258 (2015);

36. *Strongly condemns* practices including abduction, hostage-taking, incommunicado detention, torture, the brutal murder of innocent civilians and summary executions carried out by non-State armed groups and terrorist groups, most notably so-called ISIL-Da'esh and Al-Nusrah Front, and underlines that such acts may amount to crimes against humanity;

37. *Deplores* the suffering and torture in detention centres throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, as depicted in the reports of the Commission of Inquiry and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as in the evidence presented by "Caesar" in January 2014, demands that the Syrian authorities immediately release all persons arbitrarily detained and ensure that detention conditions are consistent with international law, and calls upon the Syrian authorities to publish a list of all detention facilities;

38. *Demands* that the Syrian authorities halt the arbitrary detention of individuals and release all those unlawfully detained, and that so-called ISIL-Da'esh, Al-Nusrah Front and all other groups release all those detained;

39. *Calls for* the appropriate international monitoring bodies to be granted access to detainees in government prisons and detention centres, including all military facilities referred to in the reports of the Commission of Inquiry;

40. *Demands* that all parties take all appropriate steps to protect civilians and persons hors de combat, including members of ethnic, religious and confessional communities, and stresses that, in this regard, the primary responsibility to protect its population lies with the Syrian authorities;

41. *Strongly condemns* the damage and destruction of the cultural heritage of the Syrian Arab Republic, bearing in mind the widespread destruction recently brought about by air bombings in Aleppo, a World Heritage Site of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as well as the organized looting and trafficking of its cultural property, as outlined by the Security Council in its resolution 2199 (2015) of 12 February 2015;

42. *Emphasizes* the need to ensure that all those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law or violations and abuses of human rights law are held to account through appropriate fair and independent domestic or international, criminal justice mechanisms in accordance with the principle of complementarity, and stresses the need to pursue practical steps towards this goal, and for this reason encourages the Security Council to take appropriate action to ensure accountability, noting the important role that the International Criminal Court can play in this regard;

43. *Welcomes* the efforts of those countries outside the region that have put in place measures and policies to assist and host Syrian refugees, encourages them to do more, and encourages other States outside the region to consider also implementing similar measures and policies, with a view to providing Syrian refugees with protection and humanitarian assistance;

44. *Urges* all parties to the conflict to take all appropriate steps to ensure the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel, personnel of the specialized agencies and all other personnel engaged in humanitarian relief activities as required by international humanitarian law, without prejudice to their freedom of movement and access, stresses the need not to impede or hinder these efforts, recalls that attacks on humanitarian workers may amount to war crimes, and notes in this regard that the Security Council reaffirmed in its resolution 2258 (2015) that it will take further measures in the event of non-compliance with resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) or 2258 (2015) by any Syrian party;

45. *Calls upon* the international community to support the leadership and full participation of women in all efforts aimed at finding a political solution to the Syrian crisis, as envisaged by the Security Council in its resolutions 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000, 2122 (2013) of 18 October 2013 and 2242 (2015) of 13 October 2015;

46. *Reaffirms* that there can only be a political solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, and urges the parties to the conflict to abstain from actions that may contribute to the continuing deterioration of the human rights, security and humanitarian situation, in order to reach a genuine political transition, based on the final communiqué of the Action Group for Syria of 30 June 2012,[28] consistent with Security Council resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016), that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people for a civil, democratic and pluralistic State, with the full and effective participation of women, where there is no room for sectarianism or discrimination on ethnic, religious, linguistic, gender or any other grounds, and where all citizens receive equal protection, regardless of gender, religion or ethnicity, and further demands that all parties work urgently towards the comprehensive implementation of the final communiqué, including through the establishment of an inclusive transitional governing body with full executive powers, which shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent while ensuring the continuity of governmental institutions.

65th plenary meeting
19 December 2016